

2014-2015

**2014-2015 Children's Cabinet
Annual Report**

**Presented to Governor Terry McAuliffe
June 1, 2015**

Executive Summary

In August 2014 Governor Terry McAuliffe signed Executive Order 21, establishing Virginia's first state-level Children's Cabinet. The Children's Cabinet is co-chaired by Secretary of Health and Human Resources Bill Hazel and Secretary of Education Anne Holton. Membership of the Children's Cabinet also includes Lt. Governor Ralph Northam, First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe, Secretary of Commerce and Trade Maurice Jones, and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran.

In creating the Children's Cabinet, Governor McAuliffe stated: "Children are the Commonwealth's most important resource, and it is critical that we provide them with the tools and resources they need to thrive in a 21st century economy."ⁱ Specifically, Governor McAuliffe asked the Children's Cabinet to focus on five priority issue areas:

- **Beyond the barriers:** eradicating the achievement gap in schools in high poverty communities.
- **Raising the foundation:** improving early childhood care and education.
- **Access to basics:** increasing access to basic needs including housing, healthcare, and proper nutrition.
- **Triumph over transitions:** improving outcomes for youth transitioning into and out of Virginia's juvenile justice, mental health systems and foster care systems.
- **Working parents, building families:** increasing workforce opportunities for parents.

In its first year the Children's Cabinet has provided coordinated oversight across child and family-serving systems, facilitated connections at the state level and between state and local partners, and promoted positive outcomes in the five priority issue areas identified in Executive Order 21. Coordinated oversight has been provided through regular briefings from members of the Children's Cabinet, agency leaders, outside stakeholders, and site visits. The Children's Cabinet has facilitated connections by bringing together agencies to resolve inter-agency policy matters and convening a roundtable with state and local partners to promote more effective cross-sector collaborations. Members of the Children's Cabinet have also promoted positive outcomes in each of the five priority issue areas, including:

Beyond the Barriers

- An intra-agency team was established at the Department of Education to coordinate support and technical assistance
- An inter-agency team was created to identify needs and supports for family and community factors beyond the classroom
- The budget signed by Governor McAuliffe includes over \$6.3 million to support principal training, professional development, teacher training, and extended school year grants

- The General Assembly passed Governor McAuliffe's bills directing the Board of Education to create additional categories of accreditation to recognize growth and progress

Raising the Foundation

- Governor McAuliffe created the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success, which is submitting recommendations to the Governor and Children's Cabinet on how to improve the health, education, and well-being of Virginia's children
- Virginia successfully competed for a \$70 million, 4 year federal preschool expansion grant which will allow the state to serve almost 1,700 at-risk children in new programs and 1,500 children in existing settings
- The General Assembly passed an omnibus child care bill that enhances protection for the health and safety of children in child care settings
- The Virginia Pay for Success Council and Virginia Department of Health successfully competed for a Pay for Success grant to study scaling-up home visiting

Access to Basics

- Governor McAuliffe's *A Healthy Virginia* plan will allow the children of low-income state employees to receive coverage through FAMIS and provide dental coverage for 45,000 pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid and FAMIS
- Governor McAuliffe's Executive Order 32 requires a policy review to identify strategies to address homelessness, particularly among children and youth
- The Governor's Coordinating Council on Homelessness approved a strategic plan that focuses on preventing and ending youth homelessness
- Governor McAuliffe issued Executive Order 34, establishing the Commonwealth Council on Bridging the Nutritional Divide to be chaired by First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe
- Virginia received an \$8.8 million federal grant to test innovative strategies for ensuring all children have enough food to eat
- Governor McAuliffe's budget included \$537,000 to increase access to School Breakfast through innovative service models

Triumph over Transitions

- The Children's Cabinet facilitated the development of a memorandum of understanding to ensure the needs of foster youth who are committed to the juvenile justice system continue to be met
- Virginia completed the Three Branch Initiative Grant, sponsored by the National Governors Association and Casey Family Programs, which worked to align the executive, legislative, and judicial branches to improve the social and emotional well-being of youth in foster care
- Governor McAuliffe signed Executive Directive Four to establish the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice to achieve greater behavioral health and justice coordination across public and private sectors

Working Parents, Building Families

- The Children's Cabinet recognizes the importance of two generation approaches, such as promoting workforce development for parents
- Virginia was awarded a \$22.3 million grant from the United States Department of Agriculture for a pilot program to increase job training for SNAP recipients
- Virginia received an \$11.9 million federal grant to implement the Working Families Success Network (WFSN) model, which focuses on helping low-income students prepare for jobs with family-sustaining wages

This spring the Children's Cabinet held a strategic planning session to develop strategies and goals for the next two and one-half years. To fulfill its mission, the Children's Cabinet has established the following goals:

- **Provide Coordinated Oversight.** The Children's Cabinet will provide oversight by being regularly informed by each other and other experts on key initiatives within the five priority issue areas. Staff will provide monthly written briefings on core initiatives, including schools in challenging communities, early childhood care and education, and access to food and nutrition.
- **Serve as a Connector.** The Children's Cabinet will play a unique role in cultivating open communication, new partnerships, and joint funding opportunities across agencies and secretariats. In particular, the Children's Cabinet will participate in the discussion about the best possible Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) infrastructure model for the Commonwealth.
- **Promote Positive Outcomes.** The Children's Cabinet will focus its efforts on strengthening information linkages in the Commonwealth and eradicating the achievement gap, especially supporting schools in challenging communities.
 - The Children's Cabinet will strengthen data linkages between agencies by learning about how data is currently linked and advancing new opportunities where appropriate. This will include looking at child/family level data, program outcomes, and fiscal information. In particular, the Children's Cabinet will look at data intersections around education, health, and commerce.
 - The Children's Cabinet is collaborating on the administration's initiative to eradicate the achievement gap by improving schools in challenging communities, which includes addressing the school-to-prison pipeline. The Children's Cabinet is focused on academic and wrap-around community supports that will improve the educational outcomes of youth.

Through these goals, the Children's Cabinet is committed to providing the Commonwealth's children with the tools and resources necessary to thrive in a 21st century economy.

Members of the Children's Cabinet



William A. Hazel Jr.,
Co-Chair
Secretary of Health
and Human
Resources



Anne Holton, Co-Chair
Secretary of Education



Dorothy McAuliffe
First Lady of Virginia



Ralph Northam
Lt. Governor of
Virginia



Maurice Jones
Secretary of
Commerce and Trade



Brian Moran
Secretary of Public
Safety

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Review of Children's Cabinet Activities and Key Accomplishments



In 2014 Governor Terry McAuliffe Created Virginia's First Children's Cabinet

"Children are the Commonwealth's most important resource, and it is critical that we provide them with the tools and resources they need to thrive in a 21st century economy." – Governor Terry McAuliffe announcing the creation of Virginia's first Children's Cabinet.ⁱⁱ

On August 11, 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe signed Executive Order 21, formally creating Virginia's first children's cabinet. In announcing the Children's Cabinet Governor McAuliffe stated: "Children are the Commonwealth's most important resource, and it is critical that we provide them with the tools and resources they need to thrive in a 21st century economy."ⁱⁱⁱ

Governor McAuliffe's Executive Order 21^{iv} provides that the Secretary of Education and Secretary of Health and Human Resources will serve as co-chairs of the Children's Cabinet. The Children's Cabinet also includes the Lt. Governor, the First Lady of Virginia, the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, and the Secretary of Commerce and Trade.

In Executive Order 21 Governor McAuliffe directed the Children's Cabinet to work to ensure that effective supports are in place to achieve the following:

1. **Beyond the barriers.** Schools in high-poverty communities face numerous systemic societal barriers (such as unstable housing, high crime rates, health, nutritional, and social challenges). The myriad of issues facing these schools and their students must be addressed. Opportunities for increased support will be identified, including, but not limited to, community and social services for Virginia's most vulnerable children and their families.
2. **Raising the foundation.** High quality early child care, increased access to pre-K, and educational programs lay the foundation for academic achievement. Child care providers must be held accountable to provide quality child care so that our youngest children will thrive and obtain the necessary skills to contribute to our communities.
3. **Access to basics.** Access to healthcare, housing, and proper nutrition must be facilitated to meet basic needs and ensure the healthy growth, development, and well-being of our children and their families.
4. **Triumph over transitions.** Services for youth who are transitioning out of Virginia's juvenile justice, mental health, and foster care systems will be addressed. Best practices will be determined, and replication will be encouraged. Factors leading to youth entering the juvenile justice system will be identified to reduce the impact of incarceration. Issues related to educational and work transitions from preschool to K-12 education, and K-12 education to college and/or the workforce, will also be examined.
5. **Working parents, building families.** Policies and services that encourage workforce development efforts for parents through education, credential training, career development, and employment will be addressed.

The Children's Cabinet in Action: Providing Coordinated Oversight Across Child and Family-Serving Systems, Facilitating Connections, and Promoting Positive Outcomes

In its first year the Children's Cabinet has provided coordinated oversight across child and family-serving systems, facilitated connections at the state and local levels, and promoted positive outcomes for youth and families. The Children's Cabinet has provided oversight through regular briefings from each other, agency leaders, outside stakeholders, and site visits. Agencies and stakeholders that have presented to the Children's Cabinet include the Office of Comprehensive Services (OCS), Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Voices for Virginia's Children, Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Education (DOE), and Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). Additionally, the Children's Cabinet visited a high-achieving, high-poverty elementary school in Roanoke and DJJ's Bon Air Correctional Facility in Richmond.

The Children's Cabinet has also facilitated connections at the state and local levels. For example, in 2014 the Children's Cabinet brought together DSS and DJJ to develop a memorandum of understanding to ensure that the needs of foster care youth in the

custody of local departments of social services (LDSS) continue to be met when they are committed to the juvenile justice system.



In April 2015 the Children's Cabinet held a roundtable with youth and family-serving local partners in Roanoke. The purpose of the roundtable was to hear: 1) examples of past collaborative efforts across silos to serve youth and families, 2) ideas about how education, health, mental health, nutrition, public safety, juvenile justice, housing, child-welfare, and workforce can work together more effectively to serve youth and families, and 3) suggestions about steps the Children's Cabinet can take at the

state level to facilitate connections and collaborative efforts to work across sectors and silos to better serve youth and families. One theme that emerged from the roundtable was the role of data in driving collaboration. For example, in Roanoke several organizations are building collaborations through the use of data to enhance the effectiveness of early childhood interventions. Another theme that emerged was the role of funding streams in promoting collaboration, specifically the importance of funding streams that can be used for cross-sector purposes.

Beyond the Barriers

"Schools in high-poverty communities face numerous systemic societal barriers (such as unstable housing, high crime rates, health, nutritional, and social challenges). The myriad of issues facing these schools and their students must be addressed. Opportunities for increased support will be identified, including, but not limited to, community and social services for Virginia's most vulnerable children and their families."
– Executive Order 21^v

Highlights

- An intra-agency team was established at the Department of Education to coordinate support and technical assistance
- An inter-agency team was created to identify needs and supports for family and community factors beyond the classroom
- The budget signed by Governor McAuliffe includes over \$6.3 million to support principal training, professional development, teacher training, and extended school year grants
- The General Assembly passed Governor McAuliffe's bills directing the Board of Education to create additional categories of accreditation to recognize growth and progress

Members of the Children's Cabinet are working to eradicate the achievement gap in public education and specifically to fulfill Governor Terry McAuliffe's vow that all schools in Norfolk, Richmond, and Petersburg will be accredited by the end of his administration.^{vi} The Secretary of Education's Office and Virginia Department of Education (DOE) have been working collaboratively and forcefully with all three divisions over the course of the last year to support improvement. In November 2014 DOE briefed the Children's Cabinet on planned support for challenged schools (struggling schools in high-poverty communities). DOE has prioritized this goal in all departments and has created an intra-agency team to coordinate efforts. DOE has also provided more intensive support and technical assistance to challenged schools.



The Children's Cabinet recognizes that success in school is dependent on family and community factors outside of the classroom. To learn about ways to better meet the needs of students in challenged schools in April 2015 the Children's Cabinet visited Fallon Park Elementary School in Roanoke, a high-achieving school in a high-poverty community. Almost 90% of the students at Fallon Park Elementary qualify for free or reduced-price meals^{vii} and the school has a high population of homeless students. Despite these challenges, Fallon Park Elementary School's state accreditation status is fully accredited.^{viii}



At Fallon Park Elementary School the Children's Cabinet visited a pre-K classroom, the school's vegetable garden, and an English language learners classroom. Members of the Children's Cabinet also learned that Fallon Park Elementary School maintains a food pantry and clothes closet for families in need. The Children's Cabinet's visit to Fallon Park Elementary School underscored the importance of working to address students' needs both inside and outside the classroom in order to improve academic outcomes.

To coordinate efforts to improve academic performance by addressing students' needs both inside and outside the classroom, DOE has established an inter-agency work group. The inter-agency work group is taking a deep look at the issues and needs in Norfolk, Richmond, and Petersburg and includes representatives from DOE,

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), Department of Social Services (DSS), Office of Comprehensive Services (OCS), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY), and the Children’s Cabinet. Members of the inter-agency work group have visited schools in Norfolk, Richmond, and Petersburg to learn about their needs and have begun identifying areas where additional support can be provided.

The budget Governor McAuliffe’s signed includes over \$6.3 million in funding to support schools facing challenges in high poverty communities. Items in the budget include funding for principal training to increase leadership capacity in under-performing schools, teacher professional development on serving high-needs students, teacher residency programs in Norfolk and Petersburg modeled after Virginia Commonwealth University’s Richmond Teacher Residency Program, extended school year grants, and additional support for DOE’s Office of School Improvement and research capacity.

Table 1: Support for Challenged Schools included in the Budget Signed by Governor McAuliffe^{ix}

Budget Item	Amount
Principal Training to Increase the Capacity of Principals as School Leaders in Under-Performing Schools	\$713,000
Teacher Professional Development on Issues Related to High-Needs Students	\$366,000
Teacher Residency Programs in Norfolk and Petersburg	\$500,000
Extended School Year Grants	\$4,750,000
Total	\$6,329,000

Legislation passed as a part of Governor McAuliffe’s legislative package will also support Virginia’s challenged schools. The 2015 General Assembly passed HB 1873 (Del. Krupicka) and SB 1320 (Sen. Locke).^x These Governor’s Bills direct the Board of Education to promulgate regulations establishing additional categories of accreditation that recognize the progress of schools that do not meet accreditation benchmarks but have achieved significant improvement or have demonstrated significant growth for the majority of their students.^{xi} These new categories of accreditation will recognize the progress being made in schools that are still coming up short of Virginia’s rigorous benchmarks.

The Children’s Cabinet is also working to improve school climate and increase learning time in the classroom by reducing the number of students who are referred to the justice system and to eradicate the disparate impact of school discipline and law enforcement referrals from schools. In May 2015 the Children’s Cabinet was briefed by DOE, DCJS, and DJJ about school discipline issues and the interactions between schools, law

enforcement, and the justice system. The Children's Cabinet is actively working with these agencies to develop an action plan. One area the Children's Cabinet is particularly focused on is increasing the use of Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS), an evidence-based method that has been demonstrated in Virginia and other states to reduce school discipline issues.

Raising the Foundation

"High quality early child care, increased access to pre-K, and educational programs lay the foundation for academic achievement. Child care providers must be held accountable to provide quality child care so that our youngest children will thrive and obtain the necessary skills to contribute to our communities." – Executive Order 21^{xii}

Highlights

- Governor McAuliffe created the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success, which is submitting recommendations to the Governor and Children's Cabinet on how to improve the health, education, and well-being of Virginia's children
- Virginia successfully competed for a \$70 million, 4 year federal preschool expansion grant which will allow the state to serve almost 1,700 at-risk children in new programs and 1,500 children in existing settings
- The General Assembly passed an omnibus child care bill that enhances protection for the health and safety of children in child care settings
- The Virginia Pay for Success Council and Virginia Department of Health successfully competed for a Pay for Success grant to study scaling-up home visiting

In May 2015 Governor Terry McAuliffe wrote in US News & World Report that: "Every young Virginian should reap the benefits of high-quality early childhood education."^{xiii} Recognizing that access to high-quality child care, preschool, and early childhood educational programs lay the foundation for academic achievement and school success, over the last year the Children's Cabinet and its members have been instrumental in successfully competing for large federal grants, the passage of child care legislation, and bringing forth new ideas and recommendations to improve the health, education, and well-being of Virginia's children.



In August 2014 the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success (CCCS) was created by executive order in conjunction with the Children's Cabinet.^{xiv} Governor McAuliffe charged the CCCS to examine policies related to the health, education, and well-being of children from birth through age eight, and to send recommendations to the Children's Cabinet and the Governor. Chaired by Lt. Governor Ralph

Northam and composed of a wide variety of stakeholders, over the last year the Council's work groups have focused on five major areas: The Virginia Preschool Initiative, Access to and Quality of Preschool and Child Care, Early Elementary Years (Kindergarten through third grade), Health and Well-Being, and Data and Governance.

In May 2015 the CCCS approved a broad and comprehensive set of recommendations from across these areas. Of particular note to the Children's Cabinet, the Data and Governance work group requested the Children's Cabinet provide input and guidance in two key areas: 1) establishing key metrics by which Virginia will evaluate and measure the trajectory and success of young children, ideally within the existing Virginia Performs framework, and 2) facilitating conversations about better alignment and administration of programs that serve young children, particularly between preschool and early childhood education housed at the Department of Education (DOE) and child care licensing, quality rating, and subsidy administration housed at the Department of Social Services (DSS). Staff and the CCCS work group are working in partnership to develop a work plan for these initiatives that appropriately balances them with the Children's Cabinet's priorities.

In 2014 Virginia successfully applied for a competitive federal Preschool Expansion Grant with the support of the Children's Cabinet and CCCS. The grant is providing Virginia with \$17.5 million to implement an expanded public preschool program in the 2015-2016 school year, with the potential for continued funding in equal amounts for three additional years for a total potential of \$70 million.^{xv} The program, VPI+, builds on Virginia's successful public preschool program, the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) by



establishing more than 100 new classrooms over 4 years and improving the quality in 96 existing classrooms. In total, the grant will allow Virginia to serve almost 1,700 at-risk children (those living below 200% of the federal poverty line) in new programs and nearly 1,500 children in existing settings. The Department of Education (DOE), Department of Social Services (DSS), and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) are working to implement the program in partnership with the eleven high-need localities participating in the program.

During the 2015 legislative session the General Assembly tackled child care licensing and administration. This action was driven in large part by a number of tragic incidents involving children in unregulated child care and changes at the federal level to child care administration. An omnibus bill, House Bill 1570 (Del. Orrock) and Senate Bill 1168 (Sen. Hanger), was passed that enhances protection for the health and safety of

children in child care settings by: 1) reducing the number of children a family day home may provide care for without a license from five to four children, exclusive of the provider's own children and any children who reside in the home, 2) requires licensed child care providers to conduct fingerprint background checks rather than standard background checks, 3) requires unlicensed providers to give notice to parents of children in their care that they are not licensed, and 4) requires local officials to report all local child care business licenses to DSS every six months.^{xvi} Additionally, \$17 million was provided to cover the cost of implementing these changes.

This winter the Virginia Pay for Success Council, a group of dedicated business, government, and non-profit leaders, and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) successfully competed for a Pay for Success (PFS) technical assistance grant with the support of the Children's Cabinet and the CCCS.^{xvii} PFS is an innovative public/private financing tool to fund scaling-up evidence-based interventions with no or reduced risk to the government. This grant is Virginia's first PFS project.

As a recipient of the grant, the group and state agency partners will receive technical assistance from Third Sector Capital Partners to conduct a late stage, intensive feasibility study of a proposed pilot project to scale-up home visiting interventions for high-risk pregnant women to improve infant health outcomes and reduce health costs.^{xviii} The pilot project proposes to use PFS financing to provide pre-natal counseling through home visiting to low-income Medicaid-qualifying pregnant women in four areas: Greater Richmond, South Hampton Roads, Northern Virginia, and Roanoke. The group also hopes the feasibility study will demonstrate the utility of PFS as a financing tool for other state government activities.

Access to Basics

"Access to healthcare, housing, and proper nutrition must be facilitated to meet basic needs and ensure the healthy growth, development, and well-being of our children and their families." – Executive Order 21^{xix}

Highlights

- Governor McAuliffe's *A Healthy Virginia* plan will allow the children of low-income state employees to receive coverage through FAMIS and provide dental coverage for 45,000 pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid and FAMIS
- Governor McAuliffe's Executive Order 32 requires a policy review to identify strategies to address homelessness, particularly among children and youth
- The Governor's Coordinating Council on Homelessness approved a strategic plan that focuses on preventing and ending youth homelessness
- Governor McAuliffe issued Executive Order 34, establishing the Commonwealth Council on Bridging the Nutritional Divide to be chaired by First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe
- Virginia received an \$8.8 million federal grant to test innovative strategies for ensuring all children have enough food to eat

- Governor McAuliffe's budget included \$537,000 to increase access to School Breakfast through innovative service models such as Breakfast in the Classroom or Grab-n-Go

Members of the Children's Cabinet are working to increase access to healthcare, housing, and proper nutrition to promote healthy growth, development, and well-being for children.

Healthcare

Governor Terry McAuliffe's *A Healthy Virginia* plan includes several measures to expand healthcare services to youth and families. In September 2014 Governor McAuliffe directed the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) to issue emergency regulations to make FAMIS available to the children of lower-income state employees.^{xx} Additionally, Governor McAuliffe instructed DMAS to issue emergency regulations to provide comprehensive dental coverage for 45,000 pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid and FAMIS.^{xxi}



Housing

In October 2014 Governor McAuliffe issued Executive Order 32, which directs the Secretary of Commerce and Trade and a representative of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to "identify and implement actions to enable quality, affordable housing, which will strengthen families and communities and foster economic growth."^{xxii} As a part of the policy review process required by Executive Order 32 strategies will be identified to address homelessness, particularly among children and youth ages 18 to 24 who are transitioning into adulthood.

The Governor's Coordinating Council on Homelessness (GCCH) has approved a strategic plan that focuses on preventing and ending youth homelessness. Two focus populations highlighted in the GCCH plan are youth currently or formerly in foster care and juvenile justice systems. Additionally, the Children's Cabinet is also working to support the implementation of the Interagency Partnership to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness' (IPPEYH) strategic plan. IPPEYH's strategic plan includes four goals: 1) increase stable housing for youth experiencing homelessness and youth who are at risk for homelessness, 2) build and enhance permanent connections for the focus population, 3) increase access to and success in education and employment for the focus population, and 4) increase social and emotional functioning of the focus

population. IPPEYH's strategic plan specifically asks the Children's Cabinet to serve as a champion for advancing strategies under several of these goals.^{xxiii}

Funding for housing and homelessness was also included in the budget Governor McAuliffe signed. Specifically, the budget includes \$8 million for the Housing Trust Fund, up to 20% of which will be used to address homelessness, and \$1 million for Rapid-Rehousing, \$500,000 of which will support the effort to eradicate veteran homelessness and the remainder of which is available for the general population. Additionally, \$2.1 million was included in the budget for permanent supportive housing for individuals with serious mental illness.

Nutrition



In November 2014 Governor McAuliffe signed Executive Order 34 establishing the Commonwealth Council on Bridging the Nutritional Divide.^{xxiv} In announcing the signing of Executive Order 34, Governor McAuliffe stated: "A critical component in building a new Virginia economy is ensuring that no Virginia child or family goes hungry."^{xxv} Chaired by First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe, the Commonwealth Council on Bridging the Nutritional Divide is seeking to eliminate childhood hunger in Virginia by

increasing participation in nutrition assistance programs. This includes increasing the number of local school divisions participating in the Community Eligibility Provision, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, alternative breakfast models, and additional pathways to expand meal access. The Commonwealth Council on Bridging the Nutritional Divide also is working to increase eligible household participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Virginia was also awarded an \$8.8 million federal grant to test innovative strategies for ensuring all children have enough food to eat.^{xxvi} First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe spearheaded this grant proposal, which brings together stakeholders from the Department of Education (DOE), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Department of Social Services (DSS), Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY), the Federation of Virginia Food Banks, and Share Our Strength, a national



non-profit focused on ending child hunger.^{xxvii} Under the grant proposal, DOE will implement the Virginia Hunger-Free Kids Act Demonstration Project, which will test the impact of providing three school meals a day to all children in select schools during the school year, food for weekends and school breaks, and more resources for low-income households to purchase food during the summer months when school is not in session.^{xxviii} Participating school divisions were selected based on the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals and state accreditation status, and include Buchanan, Grayson, Lee, Scott, and Smyth counties and the cities of Bristol, Galax, and Richmond.^{xxix}

In Virginia, only 52% of students eligible to start each day with free or reduced price school breakfast are able to access this most important meal of the day. To help close this gap, Governor McAuliffe's budget included an additional \$537,000 that will help schools increase access to School Breakfast through innovative service models such as breakfast in the Classroom or Grab-n-Go.^{xxx} Ensuring that every child has the opportunity to start each day with a balanced breakfast is a critical component of ensuring Virginia's children are happy, healthy and able to access the educational opportunity schools provide, and to prepare them for future economic success.

Triumph over Transitions

"Services for youth who are transitioning out of Virginia's juvenile justice, mental health, and foster care systems will be addressed. Best practices will be determined, and replication will be encouraged. Factors leading to youth entering the juvenile justice system will be identified to reduce the impact of incarceration. Issues related to educational and work transitions from preschool to K-12 education, and K-12 education to college and/or the workforce, will also be examined." – Executive Order 21^{xxxi}

Highlights

- The Children's Cabinet facilitated the development of a memorandum of understanding to ensure the needs of foster youth who are committed to the juvenile justice system continue to be met
- Virginia completed the Three Branch Initiative Grant, sponsored by the National Governors Association and Casey Family Programs, which worked to align the executive, legislative, and judicial branches to improve the social and emotional well-being of youth in foster care
- Governor McAuliffe signed Executive Directive Four to establish the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice to achieve greater behavioral health and justice coordination across public and private sectors

The Children's Cabinet and youth and family-serving state agencies are working collaboratively to enhance services for youth transitioning into and out of Virginia's juvenile justice, mental health, and foster care systems.

In August 2014 the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) briefed the Children's Cabinet on the juvenile justice landscape in Virginia. DJJ is focused on reducing the length of

stay for youth in central state facilities, and building capacity to serve youth in the communities where they live. In May 2015 the Children's Cabinet visited DJJ's Bon Air Correctional Facility to experience first-hand the transformation efforts underway at DJJ. During the Children's Cabinet's tour at Bon Air members talked with teachers, therapeutic staff, and residents. The Children's Cabinet learned about programs, such as marketing classes, that seek to prepare youth for the workforce. Members of the Children's Cabinet also had the opportunity to observe how DJJ therapeutic staff integrate their programs into residents' daily lives in their living quarters.



In 2014 DJJ and the Department of Social Services (DSS) asked the Children's Cabinet to assist in addressing issues related to youth in foster care who move into the juvenile justice system. DJJ and DSS reported to the Children's Cabinet that there were gaps in the services provided for foster children in DJJ's physical custody because of ambiguity in the Code of Virginia about who has legal custody of these children. At the Children's Cabinet's direction, the

agencies formed a work group to study the issue and a memorandum of understanding was developed to ensure that the needs of foster care youth in DJJ's facilities continue to be met. The agreement outlines the responsibilities of local departments of social services (LDSS) and DJJ.

Additionally, the Governor's Coordinating Council on Homelessness (GCCH) approved a strategic plan that focuses on preventing and ending youth homelessness. Two target populations highlighted in the strategic plan are youth currently or formerly in the foster care and juvenile justice systems.

Virginia also completed the Three Branch Initiative Grant. Sponsored by the National Governors Association and Casey Family Programs, the Three Branch Initiative seeks to align the work of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches to improve the social and emotional well-being of youth in foster care. In October 2014 DSS briefed the Children's Cabinet about Virginia's Three Branch Initiative. Since July 2013 the Three Branch Initiative has incorporated well-being activities into foster care guidance, integrated well-being outcomes into the DSS automated system, and incorporated well-being sections and outcomes into the five-year plan. Over 95% of all children in foster care are now in managed care, and DSS has strengthened the Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment (CANS). This important work will continue through the efforts of the Child Welfare Advisory Committee.

Members of the Children's Cabinet are working to improve services for children and youth with mental health needs. Community Services Boards (CSBs) have received

state funding to develop and enhance crisis response and child psychiatry services. New state funding to respond to this need began with \$1.5 million in Fiscal Year 2013 and will grow to \$6.7 million for Fiscal Year 2016. Types of new services include: mobile crisis services provided by clinical professionals in homes, schools, or anywhere needed to intervene in a crisis that might otherwise result in an inpatient stay or out-of-home placement; specially trained crisis clinicians in CSBs who can provide emergency services; and small overnight units that provide crisis stabilization services for up to two weeks to prevent inpatient hospitalizations. To address the shortage of child psychiatrists services are provided face-to-face, through telemedicine, or in consultation with primary care and pediatric providers. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) also provided a grant to the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Virginia to support its third annual Virginia Family and Youth Leadership Summit.

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2015 \$4 million in state funding is available to support services for transition age adults (youth age 16 through 25). The majority of individuals with serious mental illness experience the first signs of illness during adolescence or early adulthood, and long delays often occur between the onset of symptoms and consistent, effective treatment. Through a competitive process, eight CSBs have been awarded funding to develop creative approaches for outreach, treatment, and support of these individuals.

In March 2015 Governor McAuliffe signed Executive Directive Four to establish the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice.^{xxxii} The Center's mission is to achieve greater behavioral health and justice coordination across public and private sectors through a collaborative, multi-systems approach to data collection and analytics, evidence based programs and practices, education, outreach and training, technical assistance, and resource development.^{xxxiii} The Center was a recommendation of the Governor's Task Force for Improving Mental Health Services and Crisis Response, and will be addressing behavioral health concerns of juveniles transitioning into and out of the juvenile justice system.^{xxxiv}

Virginia was also one of only two states selected to receive a national Vision 21: Linking Systems of Care for Children and Youth state demonstration project. This project seeks to enhance trauma-informed systems of care by ensuring that all youth crime victims entering any relevant system are assessed for trauma, that children and families are provided comprehensive and coordinated services to fully address their needs, and that practices and policies are established to sustain this approach.

Working Parents, Building Families

"Policies and services that encourage workforce development efforts for parents through education, credential training, career development, and employment will be addressed." – Executive Order 21^{xxxv}

Highlights

- The Children's Cabinet recognizes the importance of two generation approaches, such as promoting workforce development for parents
- Virginia was awarded a \$22.3 million grant from the United States Department of Agriculture for a pilot program to increase job training for SNAP recipients
- Virginia received an \$11.9 million federal grant to implement the Working Families Success Network (WFSN) model, which focuses on helping low-income students prepare for jobs with family-sustaining wages

The Children's Cabinet recognizes that two generation approaches, such as promoting workforce development for parents, are necessary for children to have the best opportunity to succeed. Many of Virginia's programs that serve low-income families include workforce components. For example, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) promotes economic independence through participation in the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW) program. VIEW provides participants with employment-related activities, education, training, and needed support services. Another example is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAPET) program. Individuals who are receiving SNAP but who are not enrolled in TANF can enroll in SNAPET if they live in one of the localities served by a local department of social services (LDSS) agency with SNAPET. Similarly to VIEW, SNAPET offers training and employment-related activities, as well as education and support services.



In March 2015 Virginia was awarded a \$22.3 million grant from the United States Department of Agriculture for a pilot program to increase job training for SNAP recipients.^{xxxvi} The Department of Social Services (DSS) partnered with the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) to apply for the grant, which will allow 3,760 SNAPET program recipients to earn workforce credentials.^{xxxvii} Participants in the program will receive intensive support services, career coaching, job training, in-demand workforce certifications for regionally available jobs, and high school equivalencies and career readiness certificates as needed by each individual client.

In September 2014 Virginia received an \$11.9 million grant from the United States Department of Labor to implement the Working Families Success Network (WFSN) model at six of Virginia's One Stop employment centers.^{xxxviii} The WFSN model was developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and focuses on creating pathways and providing integrated services to help low-income students prepare for jobs with family-sustaining wages.^{xxxix} The WFSN model, which is already employed by four of Virginia's community colleges, bundles three services: 1) education and employment advancement, 2) income and work supports, and 3) financial services and asset building.^{xl}

The Year Ahead and Beyond

The Children's Cabinet's Strategic Plan and Goals for the Next Two and One-Half Years

The Children's Cabinet is committed to providing coordinated oversight across child and family-serving systems, facilitating connections throughout those systems, and promoting positive outcomes through targeted efforts to support data linkages and analysis and collaborative initiatives that support eradicating the academic achievement gap.

In April 2015 the Children's Cabinet held a strategic planning session in Roanoke. The session was facilitated by Casey Family Programs, which has committed \$63,000 to support the Children's Cabinet. In advance of the strategic planning session a survey was distributed to youth and family-serving agency heads soliciting input about what the Children's Cabinet should focus on in both the near and long-term.

Through the strategic planning process the Children's Cabinet determined that over the next two and one-half years the Children's Cabinet will:

- **Provide Coordinated Oversight.** The Children's Cabinet will provide oversight by being regularly informed by each other and other experts (agency heads, initiative leaders, and outside stakeholders) on key initiatives within the five priority issue areas. Staff will provide monthly written briefings on core initiatives, including schools in challenging communities, early childhood care and education, and access to food and nutrition. Written briefings will be provided in a format that offers a SWOT analysis providing data, data linkages, success, challenges, and risks.
- **Serve as a Connector.** The Children's Cabinet will play a unique role in cultivating open communication, new partnerships, and joint funding opportunities across agencies and secretariats. In particular, the Children's Cabinet will participate in the discussion about the best possible Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) infrastructure model for the Commonwealth, a conversation which includes a variety of stakeholders from the state and localities.
- **Promote Positive Outcomes.** The Children's Cabinet will focus its efforts on strengthening information linkages in the Commonwealth and eradicating the achievement gap, especially supporting schools in challenging communities.
 - The Children's Cabinet will strengthen data linkages between agencies by learning about how data is currently linked and advancing new opportunities where appropriate. This will include looking at child/family level data, program outcomes, and fiscal information. In particular, the Children's Cabinet will look at data intersections around education, health, and commerce.

- The Children's Cabinet is collaborating on the administration's initiative to eradicate the achievement gap by improving schools in challenging communities, which includes addressing the school-to-prison pipeline. The Children's Cabinet is focused on academic and wrap-around community supports that will improve the educational outcomes of youth.

Conclusion

In creating Virginia's first state-level Children's Cabinet, Governor Terry McAuliffe asked its members to ensure that the Commonwealth provides all children with the tools and resources necessary to thrive in a 21st century economy. The members of the Children's Cabinet thank Governor McAuliffe for this charge, and over the past year have worked to provide coordinated oversight, facilitate connections, and promote positive outcomes across the five priority issue areas outlined in Governor McAuliffe's Executive Order 21. The Children's Cabinet pledges to continue this important work, and looks forward to continuing to break down barriers and enhance collaboration to better serve the Commonwealth's children.

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